

Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2019 Mid Year Report SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL RRP

January - June 2019



102,044

SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES HOSTED IN DRC (30 JUNE 2019)

US\$ 55.4M

REQUIRED IN DRC IN 2019

7

RRP PARTNERS IN DRC IN 2019

SITUATION OVERVIEW

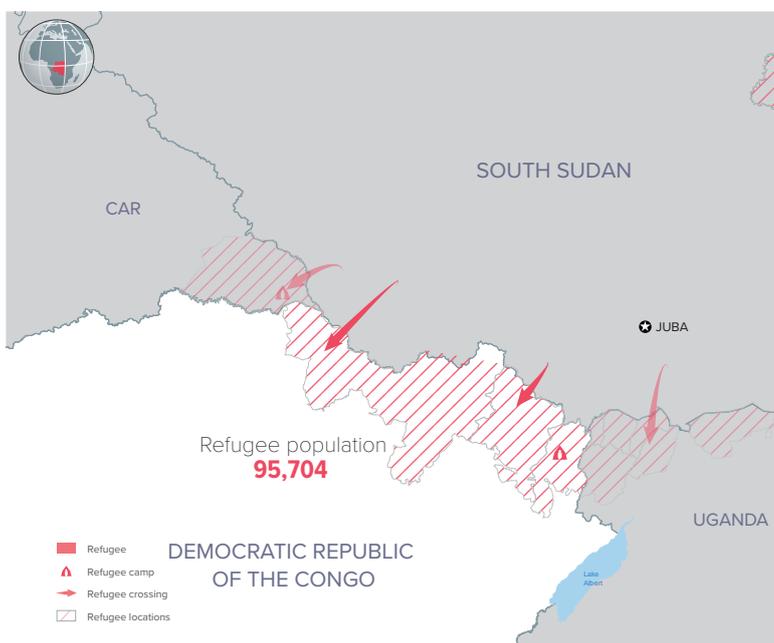
The Democratic Republic of Congo hosts over 102,000 South Sudanese refugees as of 30 June 2019, of which 63 per cent are children. South Sudanese refugee hosting areas are located in northeastern DRC (Aru territory, Ituri province; Faradje and Dungu territories in Haut-Uele province). While the largest influxes were observed in 2016 and 2017, recent clashes in South Sudan have resulted in more than 5,000 new arrivals since the end of January 2019.

UNHCR continues advocacy to end Africa's largest displacement crisis. Despite progress on establishing a foundation for peace after the signature of a revitalized peace agreement by South Sudanese warring parties in September 2018, ongoing tensions keep prospects of lasting peace uncertain.

In 2019, 5,279 South Sudanese refugees have been registered and relocated to settlements in the DRC, including 4,108 to Biringi settlement. This represents a significant rise since 2018, in particular, the numbers of refugees willing to relocate from border areas to the settlements further inland. Some of these include South Sudanese refugees who had been living in Congolese villages on the South Sudanese border for many months, or even years. Their movement inland is related to appeals from local authorities and to security incidents; armed actors from South Sudan entered Faradje Territory (Haut-Uele province) on 25 April, resulting in armed clashes with FARDC, the DRC army.

The new influx has put a stress on the availability of shelter at Biringi and Meri settlements. Newly arrived refugees, mainly women and children, are living precariously in group shelters. Existing assistance and services needs have been exacerbated, resulting in: overcrowded schools (refugee and Congolese children study together); insufficient non-food items and dignity kits; under-resourced health services; insufficient latrines and water sources; heightened community tensions, and lack of livelihood opportunities for the majority of households.

Providing humanitarian assistance to all refugees remains a challenge due to increased insecurity in the region. Since May 2019, interethnic conflict flare-ups between Hema and Lendu communities resulted in massive internal displacement, mostly in Ituri province (in Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories), but also in parts of Haut-Uele province (Dungu and Watsa territories). Security concerns limited government and other RRP partner access to remote areas, namely to the north of Dungu territory. At the same time, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) in the DRC is soon leaving Dungu territory, which may pose additional security challenges in the near future. In addition, the outbreak of Ebola continues in Eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, although the outbreak is well contained far from the refugee hosting areas.



A new settlement in Bélé (Haut-Uele) is under development. Relocation to Bélé of South Sudanese refugees currently living either outside of settlements or in Kaka settlement and the overcrowded Meri settlement will start in the second half of 2019.

The South Sudan Refugee Response in the DRC is funded at 18 percent, limiting RRP partners' ability to achieve assistance and service goals. This has slowed biometric registration (it will be completed by end 2019), and meant that some child protection, community protection, and SGBV prevention and response actions have needed to be stretched into 2020. It is hoped that the Bélé pilot on community oriented policing and local governance will address some of the protection gaps there.

RRP partners play a pivotal role advocating with local authorities to obtain access to arable land so refugees can build shelters and conduct agriculture activities. They also support the inclusion of refugees in the planning and service provision of host communities in all sectors, while promoting peaceful coexistence. Although it is also a protection priority, secondary schooling support remains limited. An Education for Peace project and 12 self-reliance projects were implemented; it is hoped that an agreement with WFP and the FAO to evaluate the potential for the expansion of their livelihoods programming will bring significant additional support in the second part of the year.

Protection



100%
of identified SGBV
survivors received
appropriate support

216

unaccompanied and separated
children (UASC) received
individual case management



Access to refugees
in remote areas
remains a challenge
due to insecurity

A total of 102,047 South Sudanese refugees have been registered or pre-registered by UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) between the beginning of the South Sudanese humanitarian crisis in 2013 and 30 June 2019. Some 47 per cent of South Sudanese refugees, who are resident in refugee settlements, are registered biometrically and hold ID cards. The process is underway now to register the remaining population who live in host communities. Refugees living in communities have less access to humanitarian assistance and those without cards are exposed to harassment by security forces, and thus have more limited freedom of movement.

The new influx of some 5,000 South Sudanese refugees has put pressure on protection response, namely registration, documentation and basic needs. The existing budget was reoriented for refugees' relocation from border areas to refugee settlements, and to cover immediate needs in shelter, health and WASH.

A total of 82 SGBV cases (65 refugees and 17 members of the host community) were reported. All survivors received psychological support, and 28 received medical care; legal assistance was only provided to three survivors cases, and two survivors benefited from access to income generating activities to support their socioeconomic reintegration.

SGBV committees were established in each settlement, composed of refugees and members of host population to sensitize communities on SGBV prevention and mitigation. Further action was hindered by the lack of resources and the availability of expertise to supplement the gaps in institutional frameworks. Work with UNDP and UN Police (UNPoI) in Bélé is expected to help fill this gap before the end of the year, with the goal of extending the approach to other parts of the area in the future.

A total of 62.6 per cent of the refugee population are children. Some 270 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are known to the office and received individual case management and psychosocial support, food assistance (two hot meals per day) and NFIs, including clothing and slippers. Children at risk cases are being managed through regular Best Interest Assessments (BIA) procedures, but children with disabilities, victims of physical abuse, child spouses and others with specific needs have not been provided direct support in 2019 due to the lack of funds and of staff. UNHCR has conducted capacity training in the past to RRP partners working in child protection; however no training was facilitated during the first half of 2019 due to underfunding. UNHCR has engaged some new protection staff to help with this gap and continues to search for a partner able to join the team with its own funding.

Education

7,367

refugee children
have access to primary
school education



Lack of funds to enrol all
children in primary and
secondary school

9,412

children are enrolled
in sports and recreational
activities

RRP education support covered 7,367 refugee children in primary school out of 10,851 - meaning that 3,484 (32%) refugees do not have access to primary school. For the first year, secondary education was supported for 612 out of 7,329 refugees of appropriate age.

Access to education is a right for every refugee child. Children out of school can be exposed to several protection risks including early marriage, abuse, a life of criminality, or child labour. UNHCR's education support includes: sensitization of parents on the importance of sending their children to school; identification of all school-age refugee children; registration of refugee children in school; payment of school fees; provision of school material; procurement and distribution of school uniforms; and attendance monitoring.

Education challenges include: school-age children out of primary and secondary school; dilapidated infrastructures, school dropouts, difficult adaptation to a francophone educational system, overcrowded classrooms, and too few teachers. More resources are needed to ensure all school age children have access to education, and rehabilitation and construction of school facilities.

UNHCR's Sports for Protection project, funded by the International Olympic Committee, has allowed the enrolment of 9,412 children in a total of 52 sports clubs in Biringi and Meri settlements. Football, volleyball, traditional and modern dances, and theatre have been made available and help, enhancing the protection of the young refugees through peaceful coexistence and strengthened social cohesion, both within refugee communities and between refugees and host populations living close to the camps and sites. Multidiscipline facilities were built in Biringi and Meri and sports fields were rehabilitated for the organization of these activities.



Food



5 months

food distributions
was conducted

\$13

as cash-for-food vouchers
are not sufficient to
respond to the needs
of refugees



47,673

refugees received
monthly in-kind
food assistance

In 2019, the increased number of South Sudanese refugees had an impact on access to food, particularly for vulnerable groups including single female-headed households, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Collaboration among RRP partners is fundamental for the distribution of cash-for-food vouchers and food rations for targeted refugee households. However, more resources are needed to ensure cash-for-food vouchers are available to all refugees. 47,673 refugees received monthly in-kind food assistance.

Cash distributions were temporarily ceased in Meri site in November 2018, due to a security incident. Thanks to RRP advocacy efforts, cash-for-food assistance in collaboration with WFP was reinstated in Meri, in February 2019. WFP and the FAO are currently assessing their capacity to extent their Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme to areas hosting South Sudanese refugees as part of a plan to reduce the need for monthly ration distribution.

Health & Nutrition

92%

of birth deliveries were assistance by qualified personnel



3 national nutritional surveys (SMART SENS) were conducted



Lack of sufficient nutritional intake for children, and pregnant or breastfeeding women

Despite challenges to provide health care to refugees, mostly due to the lack of funds, over 60 per cent of refugees have access to primary healthcare. The new influx of South Sudanese refugees strained health facilities and available health staff.

Following a confirmed case of Ebola in Ariwara, Aru territory, Ituri province, RRP partners and UN agencies reinforced prevention and mitigation activities, including capacity training of health staff, mass information campaigns, and awareness sessions for refugees, host populations, local authorities and community leaders. However additional funds for epidemic prevention are needed to cover all health zones where South Sudanese refugee are located.

Measles case fatality rate was 3.33 per cent; 543 suspected Measles cases were quarantined and treated.

Of the total 38,418 health consultations conducted in the first half of 2019, 20 per cent were provided to the host population and 47.7 per cent were for malaria cases, which remains the deadliest disease in all refugee settlements.

Some 570 pregnant women received services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and 92.4 per cent of birth deliveries were assisted by qualified staff. A further 378 persons living with HIV received antiretroviral treatment. Further assistance to HIV programming was possible thanks to supplementary funding from UNAIDS. A total of 4,335 refugees are enrolled in malnutrition programmes (654 were admitted in the reporting period). Three nutritional surveys (SMART SENS) were conducted in Meri settlement, as well as in Aba and Biringi health zones. Further funds are needed to include more people in malnutrition programmes, namely children and pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Livelihoods & Environment

2,300

hectares of arable land was made available to refugees

930

HHs are enrolled in agricultural activities in all settlements



4,748

refugee households are not involved in agriculture activities due to the lack of funds

Promotion of self-reliance activities, namely of agricultural activities, are of utmost importance to the humanitarian response to South Sudanese refugees. Some 930 households (830 refugee and 100 local Congolese) out of 2,000 targeted are enrolled in agricultural activities in all settlements. RRP partners aim to reach the set target in the next agricultural season.

Ensuring South Sudanese refugees have their own means of subsistence will allow them to become less dependent of humanitarian assistance, better their living conditions and future prospects. In addition, refugees' self-reliance will benefit the host communities by easing the financial pressure of welcoming refugees, especially in already impoverished areas, and boost the local economy.

The emphasis on agricultural activities is due to the fact most South Sudanese refugees were already involved

in agricultural activities in their home country. A large number of refugees (even those not involved in agricultural activities in the past) showed interested in pursuing these activities if provided access to land. Thanks to RRP partners' advocacy efforts, 7,011 hectares of arable land was made available by local authorities: 2,300 in Biringi, 700 in Meri, 1,483 in Kaka and 2,528 in Doruma. To date, only 161 were exploited: 106 in Biringi, 40 in Meri, 8 in Kaka and 7 in Doruma. If more funds are made available, more refugee households will have the means to conduct agriculture activities.

Support to agricultural activities also includes specialized training, the distribution of seedlings, such as paddy rice, groundnuts, beans and maize, as well as farm tools (hoes, machetes, watering cans and dig axes). Support to other income generating activities (tailoring, carpentry, bakery, hairdressing, etc.) include: distribution of tailoring kits, hairdressing kits, carpentry tools, baking machines, rice milling machines, transportation scooters and fish-farming support. 300 households are involved on these activities.

Shelter & NFIs

420

shelters constructed by refugees with new CBI approach



two transit centers built to assist relocation of new arrivals

7,694 shelters and household latrines needed



Shelter needs in Biringi and Meri increased due to the new influx of South Sudanese refugees. An emergency relocation strategy was put in place to ensure refugees in border areas in Ituri province were relocated to Biringi. Two additional transit centers were created in Ingbokolo (close to the border area) and Ariwara, while 200 temporary shelters were built in Biringi settlement as planned. However, an additional 240 temporary shelter are needed to properly respond to shelter needs caused by the new influx.

There are urgent shelter needs in Meri settlement: its maximum capacity is 20,000 people, however currently over 35,400 refugees live there. The settlements does not have capacity to host new arrivals, who are currently staying in border areas in Haut-Uele. The relocation of refugees from border areas and Meri settlement to a new settlement in Bélé is imperative and is planned in the second half of the current year.

In light of the construction of the new Bélé settlement, 125 temporary shelters were built in the reporting period. To facilitate access to the new settlement, two bridges were rehabilitated. Further rehabilitation of 12 bridges and roads is planned in the upcoming months.

To accelerate the construction of shelter, a cash based intervention (CBI) strategy was developed. Material and training on housing construction was given to 200 households (refugees and members of the host community). This new strategy has allowed refugees' participation in the construction of 420 shelters.



WASH

15 litres

of water per person per day provided



323

new household latrines built

15

equal amount of boreholes and laundry points need to be constructed to meet WASH standards



The hygiene and sanitation conditions for South Sudanese refugees living in settlements remain poor. Awareness raising efforts continued in the first half of 2019 to sensitize refugees on hygiene and sanitation practices, and maintenance of available infrastructure.

In Meri settlement, just 17.2 per cent of refugees have access to household latrines, and only 21.5 per cent have access to showers.

An environmental study conducted by the Swedish Council Contingencies Agency (MSB) in February 2019 has recommended a specific hydraulic study to be conducted prior to the construction of a new settlement in Bélé. In June 2019, local contractors led this evaluation and concluded water sources were not available in the allocated block. Therefore, UNHCR has changed initial planning to ensure water access is available in all blocks in the settlement.

In the reporting period, six boreholes were constructed to respond to access to potable water needs: three in Biringi, and three in the new Bélé settlement. RRP partners constructed 120 household latrines in Bélé settlement and a further 28 household latrines in Bélé transit centre, six in Dungu, and six in Duru. Despite the increased number of water sources, water supply is still less than the minimum standard of 20 litres of water per person per day: 13.4 litres in Meri; 13.8 litres in Biringi; 15.9 litres in Kaka; 16.9 litres in Doruma. The average considering all settlements is of 15 litres per person per day.

In addition, using the cash based intervention approach, refugees and members of the host community participation built 175 household latrines in Meri and Biringi sites.

CRRF

While the DRC has not yet declared itself a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework roll out country, its legal framework is consistent with the goals of the CRRF, and the operation continued to advance on its application.

Refugee response strategic planning takes into account UNHCR's policy on Alternative to Camps ensuring all services provided assist refugee needs and also benefit national health, education, sanitation sectors, while working with national service providers. UNHCR has constructed and renovated public schools and hospitals in Haut-Uele and Ituri provinces, permitting refugees and Congolese children study together and have access to the same health care services.

With the construction of Bélé hosting area, this approach is being taken further, with the engagement of WFP and the FAO, and UNDP and UNPol from the beginning, to support local governance engagement with newly arrived refugee residents; develop a community oriented policing approach, and improve small-scale agricultural yields so that refugees can engage with and contribute to local markets. This model will be taken further in the next preparedness plan, where hosting areas will be able to identify their needs should they be called upon to host significant numbers of refugees.

UNHCR will promote a livelihood strategy to ensure South Sudanese refugees' self-reliance, and socioeconomic integration in their hosting societies. In partnership with the National Commission for Refugees (CNR), and RRP partners, the possibility to design a pioneer project called Operation Terres Rouges is being assessed. Operation Terres Rouges is based on an agro-forestry model to ensure South Sudanese refugees' stay has as little environmental impact as possible. As for any population, building shelters, collecting cooking fuel or cultivating land has an impact on deforestation or soil erosion. The model will develop sustainable, income-generating agricultural and firewood production activities. It will not only benefit the refugees, but also include the local community, and more globally help the planet by participating in the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions. While UNHCR is funding a consultant to assess the feasibility of this project, additional external funding would be needed if this project is to be implemented. Public-private partnerships, and collaboration with other UN agencies will be fostered to ensure access to local and international markets, logistical support and additional funding.

RRP PARTNERS

- Danish Refugee Council
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- United Nations Children's Fund
- United Nations Population Fund
- World Food Programme

FOR MORE INFORMATION

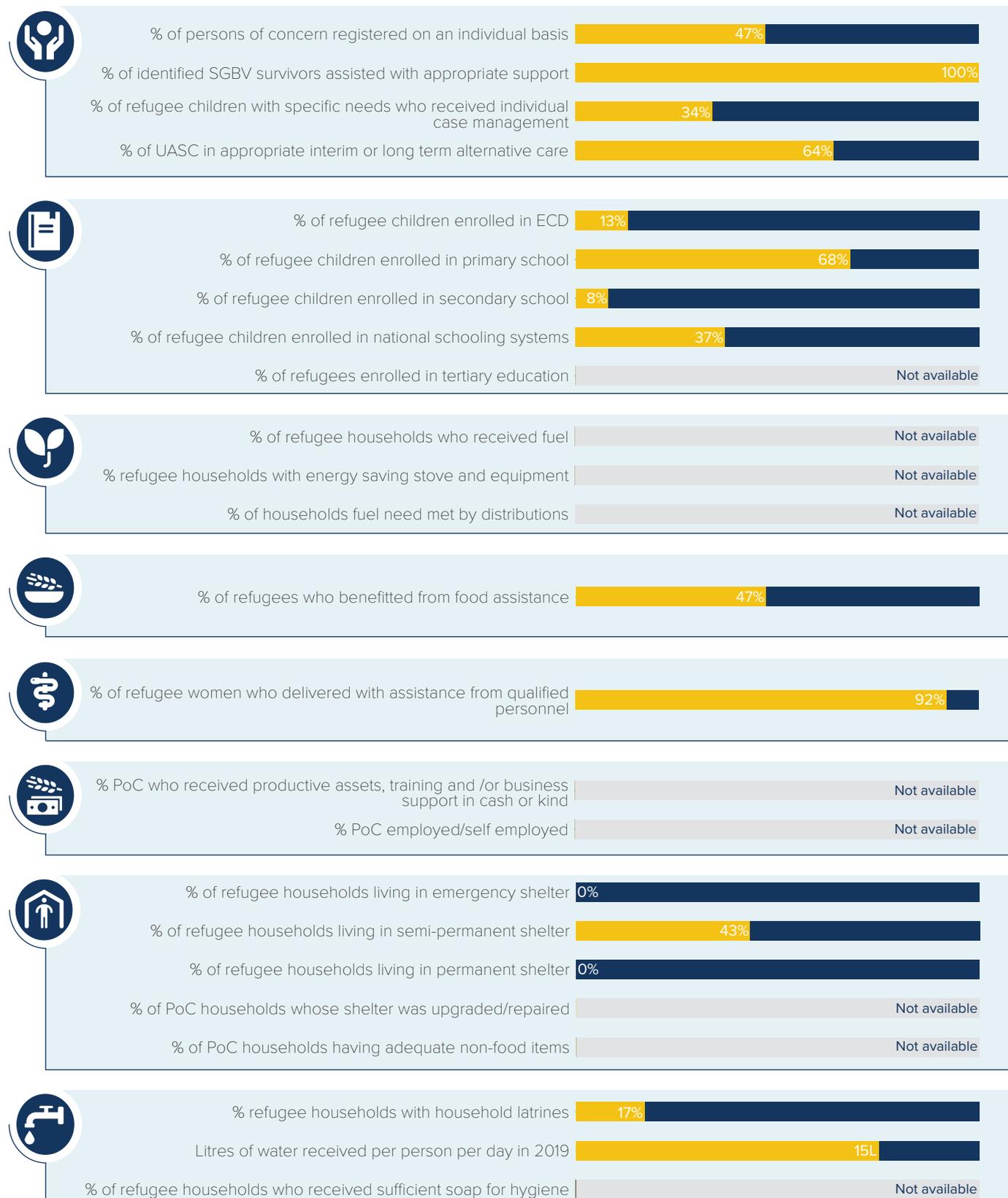
South Sudan Data Portal - <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan>

Ann Encontre, Regional Representative, encontre@unhcr.org; **Olivier Guillaume Beer**, Deputy Regional Representative, beer@unhcr.org; **Delphine Crespin**, Reporting Officer, CRESPIN@unhcr.org

Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2019 Mid Year Report

SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL RRP

January - June 2019



FOR MORE INFORMATION

South Sudan Data Portal - <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan>

Ann Encontre, Regional Representative, encontre@unhcr.org; Olivier Guillaume Beer, Deputy Regional Representative, beer@unhcr.org; Delphine Crespin, Assc. Reporting Officer, CRESPIN@unhcr.org